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Singapore envisions a zero waste nation

By eGov Innovation Editors | 2015-06-07

The Singapore government is currently looking into further legislative efforts to aid the city-state on its quest to become a zero waste nation.

Ronnie Tay, CEO, National Environment Agency, said at the recent Eco Action Day Panel Discussion held in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) World Environment Day, while the government can impose rules and regulations on companies to make them comply with environmentally friendly business practices, a more effective way to realize change is cross-sector collaboration.

One initiative in the country is e-waste recycling and a growing number of e-waste recycling programmes are now being offered by businesses though there is no legislation yet on the matter. The initiatives include the Singapore Packaging Agreement, and the Energy Efficiency National Partnership.

“Such initiatives have positive outcomes such as allowing companies to share best practices with one another and recognising companies that are doing well in these areas,” he said.

Ariel Muller, Director, Asia Pacific, Forum for the Future, said that communicating the need for sustainable business practices is also important in achieving change at scale.

“I often start with: ‘Do you agree that the future is getting more uncertain? Do you agree that there are strategic risks?’ These opening questions are a good way to identify shared risks and opportunities, and getting people on the same page. I think there are multiple solutions and I don't think they will all thrive. What we can do is to find the ones that work and amplify them,” he said.

The highlight of this year's Eco Action Day is the showcase of Singapore's largest business-led environmental awareness campaign.

“The message to small and medium enterprises, by far the largest employers in Singapore, is – there are companies that will purchase if you are advocates of sustainability,” said Vincent Lim, Managing Director, Ricoh Singapore. “I think the key is to start somewhere and hopefully use that – that I'm a sustainable company – you will probably have a better edge.”



Ricoh and its partners organised Eco Action Day and disseminated the call to pledge actions through bus advertisements, posters at commercial buildings, online advertising, roadshows and social media, as well as the Eco Action Day website, where businesses and individuals could register their pledges.